

LOVE AND A CASTNET.

By F. H. LANCASTER.

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His castnet! Paul surveyed it proudly as it hung in the falling light. Fully eight feet long, close-meshed and leaded. Woven of the strongest sea-land with a bag that would hold a hundred mullet. How many hours of patient toil it represented, only Paul Joffron knew. Hours made up of minutes snatched from a fisherman's over-crowded life. Stitch by stitch while the other boys rested at dinner or smoked cigarettes in the soft afterglow or snored before the blazing pine-knot fire. So had the castnet grown. Sometimes the broad shoulders bent to their task and ached from the strain of the day's labor; very often the tired fingers had cramped with weariness, but the lad's stubborn will had never faltered.

The day he had brought home his store of twelve, the sea-land accounted the best of its kind, and whittled out the soft pine needle. Ah, that had been a proud day. With that day had begun the thoughts that kept him awake and working, while others slept.

"Sometimes catch plenty, sometimes mebbe not catch any. Say, mek it even, say catch feefty mullet every night. Two mullet for five cents. Das twenty-five time five cents. Das five quarters. Say mek one dollar and a quarter every day. Say it costs me a quarter a day to leave—bont das, with tobacco. Das leave me six dollar a wk. Tres bon. I buy him!"

The "him" so joyously referred to being a little two-roomed cabin, nestled upon a point that ran out into the gulf. It was owned by a crabbed old fisherman who insisted that the house and its half-dozen sandy acres was worth fifty dollars, because "she done fenced on tree side already." Fenced by the blue waters of the Mexican Gulf! Everybody said that the price was preposterous; the cabin was on the verge of dilapidation; forty dollars was enough and to spare. But Paul was resolved to have it, even, as he told himself under his breath, "even if I have to geve forty-five dollars for it."

And why?

All because a certain dark-eyed daughter of the "old man" had praised the spot.

She was a pretty girl, was Marguerite, and her pet name of Bébé seemed comically out of keeping with her high head and flashing eyes. The "old man" was proud of his daughter and skillfully kept the young men at a distance. Not but what they were welcome to his house, very welcome. So welcome that he talked to them himself, all the time. Never for a moment deserting his self-appointed task.

"I thought I'd see him out, mek" one of the boys reported. "I stay till dark, yas. Late. But das old man, he wouldn't even go feed his horse. No."

Paul was not one of the boys who had tried to outbid the "old man" on the old man's front gallery. He had a bolder plan, when his castnet was done and—

And at last it was done and from thence forward every moonless night when the tide was in Paul might have been found waist deep in the water listening for the ruffle of the mullet. The strong cord of his net noosed around his left wrist, a lead between his strong front teeth. Over his right arm the folds of net carefully gathered for spreading. Instantly, at the ruffle of an oncoming school the alert figure rose higher and bent backward in unison with the backward swing of the trained right arm, gathering force for the throw. The arm swoops forward and the body with it; the lead flies from between his teeth; the net from his arm. Ah, how beautifully it spreads and sinks over that school of mullet. Truly a prince of castnet. Slowly he draws in the line on his left wrist. His



Paul Surveyed It Proudly as It Hung in the Falling Light.

heart thrills at the weight. "Heavy, ah! Mebbe a hundred. Feel laik it."

But he cannot investigate his gains out here. With the heavy wet net and it's catch on his shoulders he wades sturdily back to the beach. Eh, bien! It is well, indeed, that his shoulders are broad and his chest deep.

So the night wore to morning and he was glad, cleaning his fish and selling them, and sleeping like the dead through the afternoon.

Then there were the nights that were light, very beautiful, with a silvery beauty, but very bad for the

fisher who fished with a castnet. The next day Paul would walk the beach with no fish to sell, blue as though he had had a college education and was bothered over the "social problems" and politics.

Weeks when he met his payments; weeks when he was short and his creditor sour; at last in March the Sunday came when he could stride into church with a piece of paper in his breast pocket and in his breast the sensation of a man who owned the earth. As the congregation came straggling down the grassy path he turned and said carelessly over his shoulder to the boy who walked with Bébé:

"Well, I buy das point place, me."

"Sho," ejaculated the youth, "How much you gevee for it?"

"Oh, I dunno. Feefty-five dollars, mebbe."

"Sho!" The boy gave place mechanically, and Paul walked beside



Told Her About His Castnet—and His Love.

Bébé with the air of a man enjoying his rights.

Bébé eyed her wealthy suitor with carefully concealed admiration. "Das nice place you got," she remarked collectedly.

"Yas, right nice,—when I get him fixed up. Roof laik some. I'll split some boards next wk. Mek fence, too!" Then under the inspiration of her openly expressed interest, Paul reached for hitherto undreamed of heights.

"Tink mebbe I paint him some day. 'hat color you tink laik nice?"

Bébé rose to the emergency with an exciting sense of power. Yellow. Did not M. Paul think yas low a very pretty color. Out! certainly! M. Paul thought yellow the prettiest color in the world,—for a house. So they waxed quickly confidential and walked so close together that when the "old man" saw them coming up the slope he said things under his breath that it was not proper to say on a Sunday evening.

Where was madam, his wife and trusted ally. What could she be thinking of! He brought the front legs of his chair down upon the floor with a bang that jarred his teeth and strode to meet that absorbed couple.

"Bonjour, M. Paul."

"Bonjour, M. Zenon."

They reached the gallery before either spoke again and Bébé quickly disappeared. For all his boldness, Paul's hand shook as he rolled and lighted a cigarette, but the thought of his castnet steadied his nerves.

"I tink I come see Bébé," he announced quietly.

The "old man" snorted with astonished indignation.

"Sho!"

"Yas."

There was a pause while the indignant parent gathered his sarcastic powers for withering work. Then:—

"What you got to kip a wife?"

Ah, ha! Paul's hour of triumph had come very quietly. He tossed away the stump of his cigarette, nipped his mustache and arose to thrust his hands into his pocket.

"I got a castnet, me," he said with subdued exultation. "She's eight feet long and made of sea-land." He gave the old man a moment to take it all in and added, "I bought das point place last wk. Das deed all right?"

For a long moment the old man stared at the unfolded paper with a reverence for the written word known only to the illiterate. Then the crying need of action came over him and he lunged heavily into the inner room.

"Bebe, oh, Bebe! What for you don't hurry with das coffee, cheré?"

When the coffee-drinking was concluded the "old man" went away submissively to feed his horse and madam carried her cigarette to the kitchen steps.

Paul and Bébé sat side by side in their hide-bottom chairs, and as they watched the moon come sailing up over the wide, wide Gulf he told her about his castnet,—and his love.

New York in Farming Business.

The city of New York does a little in the agricultural line occasionally. Thus \$182.20 has been received from the net proceeds of an auction sale of apples held on the new Croton dam division of the new aqueduct. It has been transmitted to the city chamberlain for the credit of the water fund.

Mates for European Princes Are Scarce

Five Among the Scions of Royalty Available, Good Looks Are Decidedly at a Premium—Politics and Religion Limit Their Selection.



HIS year of grace is going to see some big royal weddings, the fruit of long and serious confabs between monarch and monarch behind palace doors.

The question of mating prospective rulers is becoming so difficult that the combined wits of all the crowned heads of Europe, with premiers and ambassadors at hand to help think, are scarcely equal to solving it. The obvious remedy for what has become a really embarrassing situation is to let each young heir to a throne have his way and marry the American girl of his choice. It looks as if that would be the rule with the next crop of heirs, but the present generation of royal parents and of loyal subjects isn't educated up to it yet, and no amount of fascination on the part of the American girl, or wiles on the part of her mamma will be able to effect the necessary change while Europe's thrones hold their present occupants.

One trouble is that all the royal young folk are so closely related. Inter-marriage has steadily diminished the wits that crowned heads contain until such pessimist writers as Lombroso and Max Nordau and Dr. Forbes Winslow are beginning to picture to themselves a future world ruled by madmen and idiots. There is not a royal prince or princess in all Europe who is not a cousin in some degree to every other prince and princess—and those who have the same religion and enough traits in common to make them sympathetic have, as a rule, the same great-grandparents—a fact that doesn't promise well for the future of monarchical institutions.

Another result of constant inter-marriage has been that the present lot of unmarried princesses in Europe is mostly far from good-looking. Theo-



PRINCESS WILTRUD OF BAVARIA THE PRETTIEST PRINCESS IN EUROPE

retically, of course every princess is lovely. It is as difficult to refrain from mechanically writing "beautiful" before their names as it used to be for the country reporter to write of wedding presents without saying that they were "numerous and costly." Their heavy, stupid faces become a source of embarrassment if their portraits accompany the text describing their beauty.

There are some three dozen sovereign families in Continental Europe, and between them they can muster no more than twenty princesses who are eligible for marriage to reigning monarchs. Six of them belong to the Austrian imperial family, six to various branches of the Bourbons, two to the deposed house of Hanover, and the others mostly to the minor German and grand ducal families.

Fourteen of the twenty are Roman Catholics, four are Protestants and two profess the orthodox Greek faith. This, of course, greatly reduces the number who are eligible as brides of the two best "parties" in Europe, the Russian heir-presumptive, Grand Duke Michael, and the successor to the German imperial throne, Crown Prince Frederic William. The Czarina must be an orthodox Greek and the German Empress must be a Protestant, so that were Roman Catholic princesses chosen as the brides of the future Czar and Kaiser, they would have to change their faith. Cases in which Roman Catholic princesses have renounced their religion are, however, extremely rare, for it is a rule without exception among the Hapsburgs, the Bour-



ARCHDUCHESS MARIE HENRIETTE OF AUSTRIA

bons, and other sovereign houses that their daughters may not, even for the most urgent political reasons, change their religion. There is not one single contemporary Catholic princess in Europe who has abandoned her faith in order to contract a marriage with a sovereign of another persuasion, so

that the Russian and German heirs will have to seek their consorts in other directions.

There are only two royal ladies of the orthodox Greek faith who would be eligible as the bride of the Russian heir-presumptive; one of them is his cousin, a Russian grand duchess of scanty personal attractions, and the other is Princess Xenia of Montenegro, the daughter of the reigning Prince of Montenegro, and sister of the Queen of Italy. Princess Xenia is now 21 years of age and a brunette beauty of semi-oriental type. Her lineage is of the best, for she can trace her descent back to a prince of the tenth century.



PRINCESS MARIE JOSEPHINE OF BOURBON

Of course all sorts of minor royal ties have been in love with the beautiful Xenia, but the members of the royal house of Montenegro are as shrewd and thrifty in matchmaking as the royal house of Denmark, whence came the queens of England and Russia and the King of Greece, besides various lesser personages, crowned or likely to be crowned eventually. So while there is any hope of bringing off a match between the princess and the Grand Duke Michael the others suitors will have to wait. Among them is the Grand Duke Ernest of Hesse, whose divorce from Princess Victoria Melita caused her august grandmother, the late Queen Victoria, to be greatly disturbed. Failing Princess Xenia, Grand Duke Michael will have to seek a wife among the Protestant princesses of England and Germany who may be willing to adopt the Orthodox Greek faith.

Another young beauty who stands high in the imperial marriage mart is Archduchess Marie Henriette of Austria, who is 19 years old, and a distant cousin of the Emperor Francis Joseph. Her father, Archduke Frederic, is the head of the third branch of the Hapsburgs and brother to the queen-mother of Spain.



PRINCESS XENIA OF MONTENEGRO THE BEAUTY WHO MAY BECOME CZARINA OF RUSSIA

If it were not that the pope objects to the marriage of first cousins the radiant Princess Marie probably would be the choice of young King Alfonso XIII of Spain, who has a keen eye for beauty and who has begun to look about for a bride. In fact, he will soon make a tour of the continent under his mother's guidance to pick out a queen for Spain. Unhappily for him, however, the princess has to be chosen solely on account of family and political considerations, regardless of whether she is attractive or not.

Another of the four notable exceptions to the general run of plain princesses, Marie Josephine of Bourbon, is a grand-daughter of King Ferdinand of Sicily, who lost his throne some thirty years ago. This deposed family resides at Cannes, in the south of France. Princess Marie Josephine is tall and active, an expert yachtswoman, a skilled rider and a crack lawn tennis player. She is 22 years old and an admirable match for a Roman Catholic prince, but, like the Archduchess Marie, is debarred by religion from the competition for the German and Russian thrones.

But the most beautiful of all the marriageable princesses of Europe is Wiltrud Marie Alix of Bavaria, who is now 19 years old. She, too, is a brunette, with wonderful dark eyes, perfect features and long, brown, wavy hair. Of course all princesses are said to be as accomplished as they are beautiful, but here is one who would shine among brilliant girls anywhere irrespective of rank. But unfortunately in her blood is the taint of incurable insanity, and there is little likelihood of her being chosen as the consort of any heir to the European throne.

SILENCED THE PEACE CRANK.

How Lincoln Illustrated His Methods of Statesmanship.

Soon after Lincoln issued his call for the first seventy-five thousand men, a well-meaning "peace-crank" called on him and begged him to stop the war.

"That's what I am trying to do," said Lincoln, sadly, "and lying awake nights thinking how to do it."

"But you have called volunteers."

"Yes."

"Well, do you mean that is trying to stop the war?"

"Yes."

"You are joking, Mr. Lincoln."

"No, I am in dead earnest. Some things are easier to stop by letting them run a while and slow down gradually, than by jerking them up suddenly, especially if you don't know just what is making them go. Let me tell you a story:

"When I was a boy about fifteen I had to ride a horse over to a neighboring town. The man that owned him gave me a quarter to take him there and get him shod. Well, I didn't know much about horses except from behind a plow dragging after them, so when I got on that horse I felt a little awkward. I thought I'd start right, so I cut a switch and rode off bravely.

"After I was beginning to get a little sore, and the horse was beginning to find out the sort of green rider he had on his back, something set him going, and he broke into a gallop. He got going so fast that I had to take both hands to the bridle, so I tucked my switch under my arm, grabbed the rein in both fists and yanked. He gave a leap and went harder than ever. I yanked and he ran, and the harder I pulled the more unmanageable he got. After a mile or two of pretty uncomfortable going, I found that the end of the switch under my arm struck him in the flank every time I pulled. Now I don't know enough about this war yet to feel sure that I ought to yank back. But I hope if I let it run long enough to look carefully all around me, I can make it slow down in reasonable time."

TAKEN BEFORE THE WAR.

One of the First Early Likenesses of the Great Emancipator.

This picture is a copy of a life-size portrait of Abraham Lincoln, which was purchased before the war by Henry Kuehlman of Springfield, Ill., in a second-hand store in St. Louis, Mo. The portrait, in the



opinion of Mr. Kidd, an old friend of Lincoln, is one of the first early likenesses of the great emancipator. Mr. Kidd thinks that Lincoln must have posed for it while he was trying a law case, as it was his habit, when pleading, to run his hands through his hair. Mr. Kuehlman paid fifty cents for his treasure.

TOUCHED HIS KINDLY HEART

Anecdote Which Illustrates Lincoln's Broad-minded Charity.

Abraham Lincoln was not what might be termed a religious man, but he possessed that quality which alone makes religion admirable—broad charity that takes no note of cant and despises sham of every sort. At a meeting held recently in Chicago to raise funds for the endowment of a hospital a number of speeches were made commending the worthy charity and sounding the praise of the management of the institution. But none of the speakers once during their little talks alluded to the main object of the meeting until it came to Representative Goldfogle to address the gathering.

After stating that he had listened with pleasure to the high words of praise and commendation bestowed by the speakers on the management of the hospital he said he had failed to note that anyone had felt it necessary to call the attention of the audience to the purpose that had brought them together. This oversight on the part of the gentlemen who had preceded him reminded him of a story.

"When Lincoln was president of the United States," he said, "he took a walk down Pennsylvania avenue one cold winter evening. During his stroll he met a poor, forlorn woman, thinly clad, shivering with cold. When she saw the president she mistook him for a minister, and, falling upon her knees, with hands uplifted, begged his blessing, saying that she had three small children at home starving and freezing to death. She said: 'Oh, Mr. Minister, pray to the Lord to help me.' 'When he had finished President Lincoln said: 'My good woman, it's not a minister that you need. You need a grocer,' and the president took a card out of his pocket and gave her an order for \$25 worth of provisions."

HUMOR OF THE DAY

He Couldn't Imagine. "The fashions in woman's dress," reads Mrs. Fijit, "for next fall will be even more extreme than those of last winter. They will leave very little to imagination."

"Is that so?" asks Mr. Fijit. "Well, I can't imagine yet where I'm going to get the money to pay for what you wore last winter."—Judge.

The Age of Combines.



He—One hears of nothing but combines just now.

She—I was just wondering, Edward, whether we might not soon form one of our own!

She Helps Herself. Subbubs—"Oh, yes; Backlots maintains two establishments."

Gaussip—"Well, well! How did you find that out?"

Subbubs—"He told me himself. You see his cook goes home every night and what he provides for his home helps to keep up hers."

Then He Went. "I used to like winter weather when I was a boy," said Mr. Styalat, "but I tell you the older I get the more I hate to go out in the cold."

"Yes," said she, repressing a yawn, "and, gracious, you're getting older every minute, aren't you?"

The Man She Needed. The Widow—I want a man to do odd jobs about the house, run on errands—one that never answers back and is always ready to do my bidding.

Applicant—You're looking for a husband, ma'am.

Hoping Against Hope. Gaboy (time 1 a. m.)—I say, old chap, isn't this a little late for you to be out? Aren't you afraid your wife will miss you?

Enpeck—I hope she will, but she can throw pretty straight for a woman.

Diplomatic. "Whose voice did he like best, yours or mine?" asked Miss Kreech.

"I'm not quite sure," replied Miss Bird. "His remarks were a bit ambiguous."

"What, what did he say?"

"He said he liked my voice, but that yours was better still."

Too Much. Mrs. Marryat—Mamma is talking of closing her house and coming to live with us. Do you think you could support both of us?

Mr. Marryat—My dear, I can support you very nicely now, but I'm afraid your mother would be insupportable.

Both Satisfied. Mrs. Janson said to Mrs. Lamms (in perfect confidence)—Do you know mine is the prettiest baby in the world?

"Well, really, now what a coincidence!" said Mrs. Lamms. "So is mine."

Wanted to Reciprocate.



His Pop—Bobby, I merely punish you to show my love for you, my boy.

Bobby—if I were only bigger, Pop, I'd return your love.

The Dear Girls. First Dear Girl—"Congratulate me, dear. Mr. Simkins proposed last night and I accepted him."

Second Dear Girl—"Congratulate me, dear. Mr. Simkins proposed to me last night and I refused him."